

**EXCELLENT  
ADVICE  
FOR  
LIVING  
WISDOM I WISH  
I'D KNOWN EARLIER  
KEVIN  
KELLY**

**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE INEVITABLE**

ALSO BY KEVIN KELLY

*Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems and the Economic World*

*New Rules for the New Economy: 10 Radical Strategies for a Connected World*

*What Technology Wants*

*Cool Tools: A Catalog of Possibilities*

*The Silver Cord: A Graphic Novel*

*The Inevitable: Understanding the 12 Technological Forces That Will Shape Our Future*

*Vanishing Asia*

**BOOKS & MAGAZINES  
IN ENGLISH**





Excellent Advice  
*for Living*

—••—  
*Wisdom I Wish I'd  
Known Earlier*

—••—  
KEVIN KELLY

Viking

VIKING

An imprint of Penguin Random House LLC

[penguinrandomhouse.com](http://penguinrandomhouse.com)

Copyright © 2023 by Kevin Kelly

Penguin Random House supports copyright. Copyright fuels creativity, encourages diverse voices, promotes free speech, and creates a vibrant culture. Thank you for buying an authorized edition of this book and for complying with copyright laws by not reproducing, scanning, or distributing any part of it in any form without permission. You are supporting writers and allowing Penguin Random House to continue to publish books for every reader.

Some of the advice in this book previously appeared on the author's blog, *The Technium* ([kk.org/thetechnium](http://kk.org/thetechnium)).

ISBN 9780593654521 (hardcover)

ISBN 9780593654538 (ebook)

Cover design: Jason Ramirez

Designed by Amanda Dewey, adapted for ebook by Cora Wigen

pid\_prh\_6.0\_143319814\_c0\_r0

## CONTENTS

[Cover](#)

[Also by Kevin Kelly](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Excellent Advice for Living](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About the Author](#)

*Most of all, for my children:  
Kaileen, Ting, and Tywen*

**O**n my sixty-eighth birthday, I decided to give my young adult children some advice. I am not a frequent advice giver but soon I was able to write down 68 bits. To my surprise, I had more to say than I thought. So for the next several years I wrote down a batch of advice on my birthday, and shared it with my family and friends. They wanted more. I kept going until I had about 450 bits of advice I wished I'd known when I was younger.

I am primarily channeling the wisdom of the ages. I am offering advice I have heard from others, or timeless knowledge repeated from the past, or a modern aphorism that matched my own experience. I doubt any of it is truly original, although I have tried to put everything in my own words. I think of these bits as seeds because each one of them could easily be expanded into a long essay. Indeed, I have spent most of my time writing by compressing these substantial lessons into as compact and tweetable forms as possible. You are encouraged to expand these seeds as you read to fill your own situation.

If you find these proverbs align with your experience, share them with someone younger than yourself.

—Kevin Kelly, *Pacifica, California, 2023*

Learn how to learn  
from those you disagree with  
or even offend you.  
See if you can find  
the truth in what they believe.



Being enthusiastic  
is worth 25 IQ points.



Listening well is a superpower.  
While listening to someone you love  
keep asking them  
“Is there more?”  
until there is no more.



Always demand a deadline  
because it weeds out  
the extraneous and the ordinary.  
A deadline prevents you from trying  
to make it perfect  
so you have to make it different.  
Different is better.



Don't be afraid  
to ask a question  
that may sound stupid  
because 99% of the time  
everyone else is thinking  
of the same question  
and is too embarrassed to ask it.

Prototype your life.  
Try stuff instead of making grand plans.



When you forgive others  
they may not notice  
but you will heal.  
Forgiveness is not something  
we do for others;  
it is a gift to ourselves.

The fact that you “can’t do” something  
can be embarrassing.  
But if you are “learning to do” something  
that is admirable.  
There are only tiny baby steps  
between can’t and learning.



Don’t measure your life  
with someone else’s ruler.

When someone tells you  
what ticks them off  
they are telling you  
what makes them tick.



Collecting things benefits you  
only if you display your collection  
prominently  
and share it in joy with others.  
The opposite of this is hoarding.

Taking a break  
is not a sign of weakness  
but a sign of strength.



A major part of travel  
is to leave stuff behind.  
The more you leave behind  
the further you will advance.



You don't have to attend  
every argument you are invited to.

A worthy goal for a year  
is to learn enough about a subject  
so that you can't believe  
how ignorant you were  
a year earlier.



You can't reason  
someone out of a notion  
that they didn't reason themselves into.



Gratitude will unlock all other virtues  
and is something you can get better at.

When you are anxious  
because of your to-do list  
take comfort in your have-done list.



Treating a person to a meal never fails  
and is so easy to do.  
It's powerful with old friends  
and a great way to make new friends.



Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.

If you are looking  
for something in your house  
and you finally find it  
when you're done with it  
don't put it back where you found it.  
Put it back  
where you first looked for it.



**M**ovement plus variety equals health.



Never use a credit card for credit.  
The only kind of credit, or debt  
that is acceptable  
is debt to acquire something  
whose exchange value  
is extremely likely to increase  
like a home.  
The exchange value of most things  
diminishes  
or vanishes the moment  
you purchase them.  
Don't be in debt to losers.



A great way to understand yourself  
is to seriously reflect on everything  
you find irritating in others.

The advantage  
of a ridiculously ambitious goal  
is that it sets the bar very high  
so even if your effort falls short  
it may exceed an ordinary success.



When you give away 10% of your income  
you lose 10% of your purchasing power  
which is minor compared to the  
110% increase in happiness you will gain.

The best way to learn anything  
is to try to teach what you know.



Whenever you have a choice between  
being right or being kind  
be kind. No exceptions.  
Don't confuse kindness with weakness.



We lack rites of passage.  
Create a memorable family ceremony  
when your child reaches legal adulthood  
between eighteen and twenty-one.  
This moment will become  
a significant touchstone in their life.

The best way to get to yes in a negotiation  
is to truly understand  
what yes means for the other party.



Recipe for greatness:  
Become just a teeny bit better  
than you were last year.  
Repeat every year.



Draw to discover what you see.  
Write to discover what you think.

Whenever you can't decide  
which path to take  
pick the one that produces change.



The quickest checkout line  
will be the one with the fewest people  
no matter the size of their carts.



Choose not to be outraged today.

Habit is far more dependable  
than inspiration.  
Make progress by making habits.  
Don't focus on getting into shape.  
Focus on becoming the kind of person  
who never misses a workout.



If you are the smartest person  
in the room, you are in the wrong room.  
Hang out with, and learn from  
people smarter than yourself.  
Even better, find smart people  
who will disagree with you.

You should demand  
extraordinary evidence  
in order to believe extraordinary claims.



Rule of 3 in conversation:  
To get to the real reason, ask a person to go  
deeper than what they just said.  
Then again, and then once more.  
The third time's answer  
is the one closest to the truth.

Pros make as many mistakes as amateurs;  
they've just learned how to  
gracefully recover from their mistakes.



Don't be the best. Be the only.



Everyone is shy.  
Other people are waiting for you  
to introduce yourself to them;  
they are waiting for you  
to send them an email;  
they are waiting for you  
to ask them on a date.  
Go ahead.



The more you are interested in others  
the more interesting they'll find you.  
To be interesting, be interested.

Don't take it personally  
when someone turns you down.  
Assume they are like you:  
busy, occupied, distracted.  
Try again later. It's amazing  
how often a second try works.



The purpose of a habit  
is to remove that action  
from self-negotiation.  
You no longer expend energy  
deciding whether to do it.  
You just do it.  
Good habits can range  
from telling the truth to flossing.

Promptness is a sign of respect.



When you are young, spend  
at least 6 months to 1 year  
living as cheaply as you can  
owning as little as you possibly can  
eating beans and rice in a tiny room  
or tent.

That way any time you have to risk  
something in the future, you won't be afraid  
of the "worst-case" scenario.



Trust me: There is no "them."

Tend to the small things.  
More people are defeated by blisters  
than by mountains.



You lead by letting others know  
what you expect of them  
which may exceed what they  
themselves expect.  
Provide them a reputation  
that they can step up to.

If you ask for someone's feedback  
you'll get a critic.  
But if instead you ask for advice  
you'll get a partner.



The Golden Rule will never fail you.  
It is the foundation of all other virtues.



To make something good, just do it.  
To make something great, just redo it  
redo it, redo it.  
The secret to making fine things  
is in remaking them.

This is true:  
It's hard to cheat an honest person.



Expand your mind  
by thinking with your feet on a walk  
or with your hand in a notebook.  
Think outside your brain.



At first, buy the  
absolute cheapest tools you can find.  
Upgrade the ones you use a lot.  
If you wind up using some tool for a job  
buy the very best you can afford.

Shorten your to-do list  
by asking yourself  
“What is the worst that will happen  
if this does not get done?”  
Eliminate all but the disasters.



To move through a place you may not be  
permitted, act like you belong there.



Nothing elevates a person higher than  
taking responsibility for their mistakes.

If you mess up, fess up.  
It's astounding how powerful  
this ownership is.



Hatred is a curse  
that does not affect the hated.  
It only poisons the hater.  
Release a grudge as if it were a poison.



Don't take a job  
because it pays the most money.

You can obsess about your customers  
or you can obsess about  
beating the competition.  
Both work, but of the two  
obsessing about your customers  
will take you further.



“No” is an acceptable  
answer even without a reason.

Separate the processes of creating  
from improving.  
You can't write and edit  
or sculpt and polish  
or make and analyze at the same time.  
If you do, the editor stops the creator.  
While you invent, don't select.  
While you sketch, don't inspect.  
While you write the first draft, don't reflect.  
At the start, the creator mind must be  
unleashed from judgment.



If you are not falling down occasionally  
you are just coasting.

Perhaps the most counterintuitive  
truth of the universe  
is that the more you give to others  
the more you'll get.  
Understanding this  
is the beginning of wisdom.



Keep showing up.  
99% of success is just showing up.  
In fact, most success is just persistence.

Friends are better than money.  
Almost anything money can do  
friends can do better.  
In so many ways, a friend with a boat  
is better than owning a boat.



When an object is lost, 95% of the time  
it is hiding within arm's reach  
of where it was last seen.  
Search in all possible locations  
in that radius  
and you'll find it.

A vacation + a disaster = an adventure.



Don't be in haste.  
When you are in a hurry  
you are more easily  
conned or manipulated.



Forgiveness is accepting  
the apology you will never get.

To cultivate a habit switch your  
language from “I can or can’t do”  
to “I do or don’t do.”  
You shift the weight  
from a wavering choice  
to an unwavering identity.



Be more generous than necessary.  
No one on their deathbed has ever  
regretted giving too much away.  
There is no point to being  
the richest person in the cemetery.

You need teachers, parents  
customers, fans, and friends because  
they will see who you are becoming  
before you will.



There is no limit on how much  
we can improve what we start with.  
There is no limit on better.



Be prepared: When you have 90%  
of a large project completed  
finishing the final details  
will take another 90%.  
Houses and films are famous  
for having two 90%.



Before you are old  
attend as many funerals as you can bear  
and listen. Nobody talks  
about the departed's achievements.  
The only thing people will remember  
is what kind of person you were  
while you were achieving.

Anything real begins with the fiction  
of what could be.

Imagination is therefore  
the most potent force in the universe.

And you can get better at it.  
It's the one skill in life that benefits from  
ignoring what everyone else knows.



When crises strike  
don't waste them.  
No problems, no progress.

You really don't want to be famous.  
Read the biography of any famous person.



On vacation go to the most remote place on  
your itinerary first  
bypassing the cities  
and then return to the big city at the end.  
You'll maximize the shock of otherness in  
the remote, and then later  
you'll welcome the familiar conveniences of a  
busy city on the way back.

When you get invited  
to do something in the future  
ask yourself: Would I do this tomorrow?  
Not too many promises will pass  
that immediacy filter.



Don't say anything about someone in email  
you would not be comfortable  
saying to them directly  
because eventually it *will* reach them.

If you ask to be hired  
mainly because you need a job  
you are just another problem for the boss;  
if you can solve many of the problems the  
boss has right now  
you are hired.  
To be hired, think like your boss.



It is not a compliment  
if it comes with a request.



Art is in  
what you leave out.

Acquiring things  
will rarely bring you deep satisfaction.  
But acquiring experiences will.



You are what you do.  
Not what you say  
not what you believe  
not how you vote  
but what you spend your time on.

**Rule of 7 in research:**  
You can find out anything  
if you are willing to go seven levels.  
If the first source you ask doesn't know  
ask them who you should ask next  
and so on down the line.  
If you are willing to go to the seventh source  
you'll almost always get your answer.



To earn bliss  
just for a moment  
send someone you don't know  
a compliment for something they did.



When someone is  
nasty, hateful, or mean toward you  
treat their behavior like  
an affliction or illness they have.

That makes it easier to  
have empathy toward them  
which can soften the conflict.



Eliminating clutter  
makes room for your true treasures.



Don't ever respond to a solicitation or a  
proposal on the phone.  
The urgency is a disguise for a scam.



Experience is overrated. Most  
breakthrough accomplishments were done by  
people doing them for the first time.

Therefore when hiring  
hire for aptitude and attitude  
and then train for skills.



How to apologize:  
quickly, specifically, sincerely.  
Don't ruin an apology with an excuse.



Don't bother asking a barber  
if you need a haircut.  
Pay attention to incentives.

That thing that made you weird as a kid  
could make you great as an adult  
—if you don't lose it.



Following your bliss  
is a recipe for paralysis if you don't know  
what you are passionate about.  
A better path for most youth is  
"master something."  
Through mastery of one thing  
you'll command a viewpoint  
to steadily find where your bliss is.



To quiet a crowd or a drunk, just whisper.

When you lend something  
pretend you are gifting.  
If it is returned  
you'll be surprised and happy.



You are never too young  
to wonder  
“Why am I still doing this?”  
You need to have  
an excellent answer.

A balcony or porch  
needs to be at least 6 feet (2 meters) deep  
or it won't be used.



Life gets better as you  
replace transactions with relationships.

Investing small amounts of money  
over a long time  
works miracles  
but no one wants to get rich slow.



The main thing  
is to keep the main thing  
the main thing.



When in doubt, overtip.

To build strong children  
reinforce their sense  
of belonging to a family  
by articulating exactly what is  
distinctive about your family.  
They should be able to say with pride  
“Our family does X.”



If you are not embarrassed  
by your past self  
you have probably not grown up yet.

Outlaw the word “you”  
during domestic arguments.





If you have any doubt at all  
about being able to carry a load in one trip  
do yourself a huge favor  
and make two trips.



Over the long term  
the future is decided by optimists.  
To be an optimist you don't have to ignore  
the multitude of problems we create;  
you just have to imagine  
how much our ability  
to solve problems improves.

Don't let someone else's urgency  
become your emergency.  
In fact, don't be governed  
by the urgent of any sort.  
Focus on the important.  
The urgent is a tyrant.  
The important should be your king.  
Down with the tyranny of the urgent!



Learn how to take a 20-minute power nap  
without embarrassment.

Paradoxically, the  
worst evils in the world  
are committed by those  
who truly believe they are combating evil.  
Be extremely vigilant with *yourself*  
when facing evil.



Don't reserve you kindest praise  
for a person until their eulogy.  
Tell them while they are alive  
when it makes a difference to them  
Write it in a letter they can keep.

Fear is fueled by a lack of imagination.  
The antidote to fear is not bravery;  
it looks more like imagination.



Train employees well enough  
that they could get another job  
but treat them well enough  
that they never want to.

If it fails where you thought it would fail  
that is not a failure.



Superheroes and saints  
never make art.  
Only imperfect beings can make art  
because art begins in what is broken.

If someone is trying to convince you  
it's not a pyramid scheme  
it's a pyramid scheme.



Don't create things to make money;  
make money so you can create things.  
The reward for good work is more work.



Leave a gate behind you  
the way you first found it.

In 100 years  
a lot of what we take to be true now  
will be proved to be wrong, maybe even  
embarrassingly wrong.  
A good question to ask yourself today is  
“What might I be wrong about?”  
This is the only worry worth having.



Learn how to tie a bowline knot.  
Practice in the dark. With one hand.  
For the rest of your life you'll use this knot  
more times than you would ever believe.

The greatest rewards  
come from working on something that  
nobody has words for.

If you possibly can  
work where there are no names  
for what you do.



On the way to a grand goal  
celebrate the smallest victories  
as if each one were the final goal.  
That way, no matter where it ends  
you are victorious.



In all things—except love—  
start with the exit strategy.  
Prepare for the ending.  
Almost anything is easier to get into  
than out of.



Don't aim to have others like you;  
aim to have them respect you.



The foundation of maturity:  
Just because it's not your fault  
doesn't mean it's not your responsibility.

A multitude of bad ideas  
is necessary for one good idea.



The hard part in predicting the future  
is to forget everything  
you expect it to be.



Compliment people behind their back.  
It'll come back to you.

Most overnight successes  
—in fact, any significant successes—  
take at least 5 years.  
Budget your life accordingly.



The job of a grandparent  
is to grandparent, not to parent.  
Parent's house, parent rules.  
Grandparent's house, grandparent rules.

You don't need more time because  
you already have all the time  
that you will ever get;  
you need more focus.



The foolish person winds up  
doing at the end what  
the smart person does  
at the beginning.



For marital bliss  
take turns allowing each partner  
to be always right.

If the cost of something  
is not advertised  
it is a sign that it's  
more than you can afford.



Everyone's time is finite and shrinking.  
The highest leverage  
you can get with your money  
is to buy someone else's time.  
Hire and outsource when you can.



Your best response to an insult is  
"You're probably right."  
Often they are.

Assume anyone asking for your account  
information for any reason  
is guilty of scamming you  
unless proven innocent.

The way to prove innocence is to call  
them back, or log in to your account using  
numbers or a website that you provide  
not them. Don't release any identifying  
information while they are contacting you  
via phone, message, or email.  
You must control the channel.



Fear makes people do stupid things  
so don't trust anything made in fear.

Be strict with yourself, forgiving of others.  
The reverse is hell for everyone.



If you can avoid seeking the approval of others  
your power is limitless.



Your passions should fit you exactly  
but your purpose in life should exceed you.  
Work for something  
much larger than yourself.

When a child asks an endless string of  
“Why?” questions, the smartest reply is  
“I don’t know, what do you think?”



Recipe for success:  
underpromise and overdeliver.



Show me your calendar  
and I will tell you your priorities.  
Tell me who your friends are  
and I'll tell you where you're going.



When brainstorming  
improvising  
jamming with others  
you'll go much further and deeper  
if you build upon each contribution  
with a playful “yes—and” example  
instead of a deflating “no—but” reply.

Work to become, not to acquire.



Contemplating the weaknesses of others  
is easy;  
contemplating the weaknesses in yourself  
is hard  
but it pays a much higher reward.



When you are young  
have friends who are older;  
when you are old  
have friends who are younger.

You will complete your mission in life when  
you figure out  
what your mission in life is.  
Your purpose is to discover your purpose.  
This is not a paradox.  
This is the way.



With sharp things  
always cut away from yourself.

Calm is contagious. Be calm to help others.



When someone tells you something is  
wrong, they're usually right.  
When they tell you how to fix it  
they're usually wrong.



You are only as young  
as the last time you changed your mind.



When hitchhiking  
look like the person you want  
to pick you up.

Worth repeating: Measure twice, cut once.



Money is overrated.

Truly new things rarely need an abundance of money. If that was so, billionaires would have a monopoly on inventing new things, and they don't. Instead, almost all breakthroughs are made by those who lack money. If breakthroughs could be bought, then the rich would buy them. Instead, passion, persistence, belief, and ingenuity are required to invent new things qualities the poor and young often have in abundance. Stay hungry.

If you can't tell what you desperately need  
it's probably sleep.





Ignore what others may be thinking of you  
because they aren't thinking of you.



Writing down one thing  
you are grateful for each day  
is the cheapest possible therapy ever.

If you meet a jerk, ignore them.  
If you meet jerks everywhere every day  
look deeper into yourself.



It is much easier  
to change how you think  
by changing your behavior  
than it is to change your behavior  
by changing how you think.  
Act out the change you seek.

If you think you saw a mouse, you did.  
And if there is one, there are more.



Don't worry how or where you begin.  
As long as you keep moving, your  
success will arrive far from where you start.



Avoid hitting the snooze button.  
That's just training you to oversleep.

You'll learn a lot more  
if you ask people  
"how are you sleeping?"  
instead of "how are you doing?"



Generally, say less than necessary.



Each time you connect to people  
bring them a blessing;  
then they'll be happy to see you  
when you bring them a problem.

Even in the tropics it gets colder at night  
than you think. Pack warmly.



The work on any worthy project is  
endless, infinite.

You cannot limit the work  
so you must limit your hours.

Your time, not the work  
is the only thing you can manage.

You can reduce the annoyance  
of someone's stupid belief  
by increasing your understanding  
of why they believe it.



This is the best time ever  
to make something.  
None of the greatest, coolest creations 20  
years from now have been invented yet.  
You are not late.

To transcend the influence of your heroes  
copy them shamelessly like a student  
until you get them out of your system.  
That is the way of all masters.



Things do not need to be perfect  
to be wonderful.  
Especially weddings.



When you are stuck, sleep on it.  
Give your subconscious an assignment  
while you sleep.  
You'll have an answer in the morning.

All the greatest prizes in life  
in wealth, relationships, or knowledge  
come from the magic  
of compounding interest  
by amplifying small steady gains.  
All you need for abundance is  
to keep adding 1% more than you subtract  
on a regular basis.



You can eat any dessert you want  
if you take only three bites.



Don't treat people as bad as they are.  
Treat them as good as you are.



Children totally accept  
—and crave—family rules.  
“In our family we have a rule for X”  
is the only excuse a parent needs  
for setting a family policy.  
In fact, “I have a rule for X”  
is the only excuse you need  
for your own personal policies.



When you confront a stuck bolt or screw:  
righty tighty, lefty loosey.

Bad things can happen fast  
but almost all good things happen slowly.



We are not a body  
that carries a soul.  
We are a soul that is assigned a body  
not of our choosing, but in our care.

If your goal does not have a schedule,  
it is a dream.



Be a good ancestor.  
Do something a future generation  
will thank you for.  
A simple thing is to plant a tree.



People can't remember  
more than three points from a speech.

The greatest breakthroughs are missed  
because they look like really hard work.



To be remarkable, read books.



Finite games are played  
to win or lose.  
Infinite games are played  
to keep the game going.  
Seek out infinite games  
because they yield unlimited rewards.

To succeed, get other people to pay you;  
to become wealthy, help other people  
to succeed.



Your behavior, not your opinions  
will change the world.



A problem that can easily be solved with money  
is not really a problem  
because  
its solution is obvious.  
Focus on problems with non-obvious solutions.

Every person you meet  
knows an amazing lot about something  
you know virtually nothing about.  
It won't be obvious  
and your job is to discover what it is.



Cultivate an allergy to average.



To combat an adversary  
become their friend.



If you are buying stock, the person selling  
it thinks it is worth less than you do.

If you are selling, they think it is  
worth more than you do.

Each time you are ready to  
buy or sell stock  
ask yourself

“What do I know that they don’t?”



You don’t marry a person  
you marry a family.

Be nice to your children because they are  
going to choose your nursing home.



About 99% of the time  
the right time is right now.



All guns are loaded.

Cultivate 12 people who love you  
because they are worth more  
than 12 million people who like you.



Always be quick to give credit  
and to take blame.



Be frugal in all things  
except in your passions.  
Select a few interests  
that you gleefully splurge on.  
In fact, be all-around thrifty  
*so that* you can splurge on your passions.

To manage yourself use your head;  
to manage others use your heart.



Dance with your hips.



Don't let your email inbox  
become your to-do list run by others.

The best way to untangle a knotty tangle is not to “untie” the knots but to keep pulling the loops apart wider and wider. Just make the mess as big, loose, and open as possible. As you open up the knots, they will unravel themselves. Works on cords, strings, hoses yarns, or electronic cables.



Take one simple thing  
—almost anything—  
but take it extremely seriously  
as if it is the only thing in the world  
—or maybe the entire world is in it—  
and by taking it seriously  
you’ll light up the sky.

When making something  
always get a few extras—extra material  
extra parts, extra space, extra finishes.  
The extras serve as backups for mistakes  
reduce stress  
and fill your inventory for the future.  
They are the cheapest insurance.



No one is as impressed with your  
possessions as you are.

Don't ever work for someone  
you don't want to become.



No secrets. You are much better off  
delivering unwelcome news  
to someone yourself directly.  
A secret is rarely unknown, which means  
inevitably someone else will share it.  
Meanwhile, the secret  
corrodes all who hold it.  
Resist accepting secrets.



The expanding universe is  
overflowing with abundance.  
It is so full that improvement can often be  
gained only by subtracting.  
Keep removing, until you can't.  
End with wanting more, not less.



Figure out what time of day you are most  
productive and protect that time period.



Experiences are fun  
and having influence is rewarding  
but only mattering makes us happy.  
Do stuff that matters.

Greatness is incompatible with  
optimizing in the short term.  
To achieve greatness  
requires a long view.  
Raise your time horizon to raise your goal.



Most wonderful things  
quickly become unwonderful  
if they are repeated too often.  
Once-in-a-life is often the optimal interval.

When you open paint  
even a tiny bit, it will always find its way to  
your clothes no matter how careful you are.  
Dress accordingly.



You have to first follow the rules  
with diligence in order to  
break them productively.



If you stop to listen to a musician  
or street performer for more than a minute  
you owe them a dollar.

Learning probability and statistics  
is far more useful  
than learning algebra and calculus.



If winning  
becomes too important in a game  
change the rules to make it more fun.  
Changing rules can become the new game.



The greatest teacher is called “doing.”

Anything you say before the word “but”  
does not count.



Courtesy costs nothing.  
When you borrow something, return it  
cleaned. Lower the toilet seat after use.  
Let the car in front of you merge. Return  
shopping carts to their designated areas.  
Let the people in the elevator  
exit before you enter.  
These courtesies are free.

Whenever there is an argument between  
two sides  
find the third side.



The consistency of your endeavors  
(exercise, companionship, work)  
is more important than the quantity.  
Nothing beats small things done every day  
which is way more important  
than what you do occasionally.

When you lead  
your real job is to create more leaders  
not more followers.



It is the duty of a teacher  
to get everything out of a student  
and the duty of a student  
to get everything out of a teacher.



Efficiency is highly overrated;  
goofing off is highly underrated.  
Regularly scheduled sabbaths, sabbaticals  
vacations, breaks, aimless walks  
and time off are essential for top  
performance of any kind.  
The best work ethic  
requires a good rest ethic.



Speak confidently as if you are right  
but listen carefully as if you are wrong.



Productivity is often a distraction.  
Don't aim for better ways to get through  
your tasks as quickly as possible.  
Instead aim for better tasks  
that you never want to stop doing.



Your enjoyment of travel is inversely  
proportional to the size of your luggage.  
This is 100% true of backpacking.  
It is liberating to realize  
how little you really need.

Ask funders for money  
and they'll give you advice;  
but ask for advice  
and they'll give you money.



The biggest lie we tell ourselves is  
“I don't need to write this down  
because I will remember it.”

Criticize in private, praise in public.



Don't keep making the same mistakes;  
try to make new mistakes.



Your growth as a mature being  
is measured by the number of  
uncomfortable conversations  
you are willing to have.

Handy measure: The distance between the  
fingertips of your outstretched arms  
at shoulder level is roughly your height.



Don't buy anything late at night.  
There is nothing you need to buy that  
cannot wait till tomorrow morning.

When you have good news  
and bad news, give the bad news first  
because we remember how things  
end more than how they begin.  
So elevate the ending with good news.



Immediately pay what you owe  
to vendors, workers, contractors.  
If you do, they will go out of their way  
to work with you first next time.



The four most powerful words in any  
negotiation should be uttered by you:  
“Can you do better?”

Three things you need:  
the ability to not give up something  
till it works  
the ability to give up something  
that does not work  
and the trust in other people to help you  
distinguish between the two.



You can find no better medicine  
for your family  
than regular meals together  
without screens.

There is no such thing as being “on time.”  
Either you are late or you are early.  
Your choice.



Making art is not selfish;  
it's for the rest of us.  
If you don't do your thing  
you are cheating us.



In a genuine survival situation,  
you can go 3 weeks without food  
and 3 days without water  
but only 3 hours without warmth or shade.  
So don't worry about food.  
Focus on temperature and water.



When you are in the wrong  
be quick to chastise yourself more severely  
than the aggrieved might.  
Paradoxically, this can soften their ire.

Learn how to be alone without being lonely.  
Solitude is essential for creativity.



When you feel like quitting  
just do five more:  
5 more minutes, 5 more pages  
5 more steps. Then repeat. Sometimes  
you can break through and keep going  
but even if you can't, you ended five ahead.  
Tell yourself that you will quit tomorrow  
but not today.

Never ask someone if they are pregnant.  
Let them tell you.



What you do on your bad days  
matters more  
than what you do on your good days.



Ask anyone you admire:  
Their lucky breaks happened on a detour  
from their main goal.  
So embrace detours.  
Life is not a straight line for anyone.

To be rich  
you don't need to make more money;  
you chiefly need to better manage  
the money already flowing  
through your hands.



When speaking to an audience  
pause frequently.  
Pause before you say  
something in a new way  
pause after you have said something  
you believe is important  
and pause as a relief  
to let listeners absorb details.

The best way to get a correct answer  
on the internet is  
to post an obviously wrong answer  
and wait for someone to correct you.



You'll get 10 times better results  
by elevating good behavior  
rather than punishing bad behavior  
especially in children and animals.

Spend as much time crafting the subject line of an email as the message itself because the subject line is often the only thing people read.



When you're checking references for a job applicant, their employer may be prohibited from saying anything negative so leave or send a message that says "Get back to me if you highly recommend this applicant as super great." If they don't reply, take that as a negative.

Don't wait for the storm to pass;  
dance in the rain.



Make stuff that is good for people to have.



Keep all your things visible  
in a hotel room, not in drawers  
and all gathered into one spot. That way  
you'll never leave anything behind.  
If you need to have something like a  
charger off to the side  
place a couple of other large items next to  
it, because you are less likely  
to leave three items behind than just one.



Denying or deflecting a compliment  
is rude. Accept it with thanks  
even if you believe it is not deserved.

Always read the plaque  
next to the monument.



When you have some success, the feeling of  
being an imposter can be real.

Who am I fooling?

But when you create things that only you  
with your unique talents  
and experience can do  
then you are absolutely not an imposter.

You are the ordained.

It is your destiny to work  
on things that only you can do.

To keep young kids behaving well on a car road trip, have a bag of their favorite unwrapped candy and throw a piece out the window each time they misbehave.



When you don't know how much to pay someone for a particular task ask them, "What would be fair?" and their answer usually is.

The general strategy for real estate  
is to buy the worst property  
on the best street.



You cannot get smart people to work  
extremely hard just for money.



Half the skill of being educated  
is learning what you can ignore.

If you're doing something  
that you are hiding from others  
it's probably not good for you.



When you need to cut something  
extremely exact  
don't try to do it with one cut.  
Instead, cut it a bit bigger and then keep  
trimming it bit by bit until perfect.  
Professional makers call this "creeping up"  
to the precise measurement.

Make others feel they are important; it will  
make their day and it will make your day.



Constantly search for  
overlapping areas of agreement  
and dwell there.  
Disagreements will appear to be edge cases.



90% of everything is crap.  
If you think you don't like opera, romance  
novels, TikTok, country music, vegan food  
NFTs, keep trying to see  
if you can find the 10% that is not crap.

You will be judged on how well you treat  
those who can do nothing for you.



We tend to overestimate  
what we can do in a day  
and underestimate  
what we can achieve in a decade.  
Miraculous things can be accomplished  
if you give it 10 years.  
A long game will compound small gains  
that will be able to overcome  
even big mistakes.

Let someone know  
you remembered their name  
and they won't ever forget yours.  
To help remember their name  
repeat it on first hearing.



Your best job  
will be one that you were unqualified for  
because it stretches you.  
In fact, only apply to jobs  
you are unqualified for.



You can be whatever you want to be  
so be the person who ends meetings early.



Buy used books.  
They have the same words as the new ones.  
Also, libraries.

A wise man said: Before you speak, let  
your words pass through three gates.  
At the first gate, ask yourself, “Is it true?”  
At the second gate ask, “Is it necessary?”  
At the third gate ask, “Is it kind?”



The only productive way to answer  
“What should I do now?”  
is to first tackle the question of  
“Who should I become?”

When you board an airplane, arrive at your  
room in a hotel, or start a new job, locate  
the emergency exits.  
It only takes a minute.



The best investing advice:  
Average returns, maintained  
for above-average periods of time  
will yield extraordinary results.  
Buy and hold.



Take the stairs.

What you actually pay for something  
can be twice the listed price  
because the energy, time, and money needed  
to set it up, learn, maintain, repair it  
and then dispose of it when done  
all have their own cost.  
Not all prices appear on labels.



If a young student is struggling  
first thing: Check their eyesight.

It's thrilling to be extremely polite  
to rude strangers.



Most articles and stories  
are improved significantly if you delete the  
first page of the manuscript.  
Start with the action.

Getting cheated occasionally  
is the small price  
for trusting the best of everyone  
because when you trust the best in others  
they generally treat you best.



It's possible that a not-so-smart person  
who can communicate well  
can do much better than a super-smart  
person who can't communicate well.  
That is good news  
because it is much easier  
to improve your communication skills  
than your intelligence.

Take note if you find yourself wondering  
“Where is my good knife?”  
or “Where is my good pen?”  
That means you have bad ones.  
Get rid of those.



For the best results with your children  
spend only half the money  
you think you should  
but double the time with them.



Avoid wearing a hat  
that has more character than you do.

Looking ahead, focus on direction  
rather than destinations.  
Maintain the right direction  
and you'll arrive at where you want to go.



Art is whatever you can get away with.



Purchase the most recent tourist guidebook  
to your hometown or region.  
You'll learn a lot  
by playing the tourist once a year.



To become a hero, thank a teacher  
who made a difference in your life.



When buying a garden hose, an extension  
cord, or a ladder, get one substantially  
longer than you think you need.  
It'll be the right size.

When you are stuck  
explain your problem to others.  
Often simply laying out a problem  
will present a solution.  
Make “explaining the problem”  
part of your troubleshooting process.



Don't wait in line to eat something famous.  
It is rarely worth the wait.



When introduced to someone  
make eye contact and count to four  
or say to yourself, “I see you.”  
You'll both remember each other.

Your group can achieve great things  
way beyond your means  
simply by showing people  
that they are appreciated.



Be a pro. Back up your backup.  
Have at least one physical backup  
and one backup in the cloud.  
Have more than one of each.  
How much would you pay to retrieve all  
your data, photos, notes if you lost them?  
Backups are cheap compared to regrets.

Prescription for popular success:  
do something strange.  
Make a habit of your weird.



Your time and space are limited.  
Remove, give away, throw out anything that  
no longer gives you joy  
in order to make room for those that do.

To signal an emergency  
use the rule of 3:  
3 shouts, 3 horn blasts, or 3 whistles.



Don't compare your inside  
to someone else's outside.

Explore or optimize?

Do you optimize what you know will sell  
or explore with something new?

Do you order a restaurant dish  
you are sure is great (optimize)  
or do you try something new?

Do you keep dating new folks (explore)  
or try to commit to someone you met?

The ideal balance for exploring new things  
vs. optimizing those already found  
is  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

Spend  $\frac{1}{3}$  of your time on exploring and  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  on optimizing and deepening.

As you mature it is harder to devote time  
to exploring because it seems unproductive  
but aim for  $\frac{1}{3}$ .



Occasionally your first idea is best,  
but usually it's the fifth idea.  
You need to get all the obvious ideas  
out of the way.  
Try to surprise yourself.



Don't bother fighting the old  
just build the new.



Actual great opportunities will not have  
“Great Opportunities” in the subject line.

When someone tells you  
about the peak year of human history  
the period of time when things were good  
before things went downhill  
it will always be the year  
when they were 10 years old—  
which is the peak of any human's existence.  
Factor that into what they say.



To rapidly reveal the true character  
of a person you just met  
observe them stuck on  
an abysmally slow internet connection.



In preparing for a long hike  
old shoes of any type are superior to  
brand-new shoes of any type.  
Don't use a long hike to break in shoes.



When negotiating  
don't aim for a bigger piece of the pie;  
aim to create a bigger pie.



You are as big  
as the things that make you angry.

You see only 2% of another person  
and they see only 2% of you.  
Attune yourself to the hidden 98%.



Our descendants will achieve things  
that will amaze us  
yet a portion of what they will create  
could have been made with today's  
materials and tools  
if we had had the imagination.  
Think bigger.

Do more of what looks like work to others  
but is play for you.



If you want something to get done  
ask a busy person to do it.



Remember that repair tasks  
take 3 times longer  
than expected  
even when you expect them  
to take 3 times longer.

Copying others  
is a good way to start.  
Copying yourself  
is a disappointing way to end.



If you repeated what you did today  
365 more times  
will you be where you want to be next year?

The best time to negotiate your salary  
for a new job is the moment *after*  
they say they want you  
and not before.

Then it becomes a game of chicken  
for each side to name an amount first  
but it is to your advantage  
to get them to give a number before you do.



Pay attention to  
what you pay attention to.

For maximum results  
focus on your biggest opportunities  
not your biggest problems.



Every breakthrough  
is at first laughable and ridiculous.  
In fact, if it did not start out  
laughable and ridiculous  
it is not a breakthrough.

Reading to your children regularly  
is the best school they will ever get.



If you don't smoke before the age of 25  
you are unlikely to ever start;  
if you do smoke before 25  
you are unlikely to ever quit.



It doesn't matter how many people  
don't appreciate you or your work.  
The only thing that counts is how many do.



It is far safer after a car accident  
to remain in the car  
rather than standing near it on the road  
where the accident increases  
the chances of another accident.



When you are looking for a job, remember  
that somewhere an employer is desperately  
    hunting for someone like you  
    especially if you are unconventional.  
Your real job is to make that match happen  
and it is worth whatever time it takes.



Rather than steering your life  
to avoid the unexpected  
    aim directly for it.

Don't grocery shop while hungry.



If your opinions on one subject  
can be predicted  
from your opinions on another  
you may be in the grip of an ideology.  
When you truly think for yourself  
your conclusions will not be predictable.



You can really change someone's life for the better  
simply by offering words of encouragement.



When you are presented with a task that  
could be completed in 2 minutes or less  
do it immediately.

The stronger your beliefs,  
the stronger your reasons  
to question them regularly.  
Don't simply believe everything  
you think you believe.



When a customer of yours complains  
always apologize first and ask  
“What can we do to resolve this?”  
even if it is not your fault.  
Acting as if the customer is right  
is a small tax to pay to grow a business.

If you loan someone \$20  
and you never see them again  
because they are avoiding paying you back  
that makes it worth \$20.



A superpower worth cultivating  
is learning from people you don't like.  
It is called "humility."  
This is the courage  
to let dumb, stupid, hateful, crazy, mean  
people teach you something  
because despite their character flaws  
they each know something you don't.

Don't purchase extra insurance  
if you are renting a car with a credit card.



For every good thing you love  
ask yourself what your proper dose is.

Hikers' rule:

Don't step on what you can step over;  
don't step over what you can walk around.



The trick to making wise decisions  
is to evaluate your choices as if  
you were looking back 25 years from today.  
What would your future self think?



To be interesting  
just tell your own story  
with uncommon honesty.

When speaking to an audience  
it's better to fix your gaze on a few people  
than to “spray” your gaze across the room.  
Your eyes telegraph to others whether  
you really believe what you are saying.



The main reason  
to produce something every day  
is that you must throw away  
a lot of good work to reach the great stuff.  
To let it all go easily  
you need to be convinced that  
there is “more where that came from.”  
You get that in steady production.



The real test of your character  
is not how you deal with adversity—  
although that will teach you much.  
The real test is how you deal with power.  
The only cure for power is humility  
and the admission that  
your power comes from luck.  
The small person believes they are superior;  
the superior person knows they are lucky.



You will thrive more  
—and so will others—  
when you promote what you love  
rather than bash what you hate.  
Life is short; focus on the good stuff.

When sharing, one person divides  
the other chooses.



It is easy to get trapped  
by your own success.  
Say no to tasks you probably won't fail at  
and say yes to what you could fail at.

Unhappiness comes from  
wanting what others have.  
Happiness comes from  
wanting what you already have.



When working with electricity  
volts hurt, but amps kill.



To get your message across  
follow this formula used by  
ad writers everywhere:  
simplify, simplify, simplify, then exaggerate.

Pay attention  
to who you are around  
when you feel your best.  
Be with them more often.



Assume no one remembers names.  
As a courtesy  
reintroduce yourself by name  
even to those you have previously met:  
“Hi, I’m Kevin.”

What you do instead of work  
might become your real work.



The very best thing  
you can do for your kids  
is to love your spouse.

Your golden ticket  
is being able to see things  
from other people's point of view.  
This shift enables heartfelt empathy.  
It also allows you to persuade others  
and it is the key to great design.  
Mastering the view through the eyes of others  
will unlock so many doors.



If you think that something  
“goes without saying,”  
it is usually best for everyone  
if you just go ahead and say it.

To meditate, sit  
and pay attention to your breathing.  
Your mind will wander to thoughts.  
Then you bring your attention back  
to your breathing  
where it can't think.  
Wander. Retreat.  
Keep returning to breath  
no thoughts.  
That is all.



Five years from now  
you will wish you had started today.

If we all threw our troubles  
into a big pile  
and we saw everyone else's problems  
we would immediately grab ours back.



Your heart needs to be  
as educated as your mind.



You can't change your past  
but you can change your story about it.  
What is important is not  
what happened to you but  
what you *did* about what happened to you.



To have a great trip, head toward an  
interest rather than to a place.  
Travel to passions rather than destinations.



Let your children  
choose their punishments.  
They'll be tougher than you will.

In the garden  
dig a \$100 hole for a \$10 plant.



Fully embrace  
“What is the *worst* that can happen?”  
at each juncture in life.  
Rehearsing your response to the “worst” can  
reveal it as an adventure  
and rob it of its power to stall you.

Make one to throw away.  
The only way to write a great book  
is to first write an awful book.  
Ditto for a movie, song, piece of furniture  
or anything.



For lofty goals, measure your progress from  
where you started  
rather than where you need to finish.

You increase your chance  
of successfully removing a clothing stain  
if you keep it wet while you work on it.  
It's much harder once it dries out.



Anger is not the proper response to anger.  
When you see someone angry  
you are seeing their pain.  
Compassion  
is the proper response to anger.

When you find something you really enjoy  
do it slowly.



Ignore dogs that bark.  
Look for the charging dog not barking.  
That is the one who bites.



Assuming you are average  
half of the world  
will be less proficient than you.  
Through no fault of their own  
many of these people can't handle forms  
complex instructions, or tricky situations.  
Be kind to them because the world is not.

Your flaws and your strengths  
are two poles of the same traits.  
For instance, there is only  
a tiny difference between  
stubbornness and perseverance  
or between courage and foolishness.  
The sole difference is in the goal.  
It's stupid stubbornness  
and reckless foolishness  
if the goal does not matter, and  
relentless perseverance and  
courage if it does.  
To earn dignity with your flaws  
own up to them, and  
make sure you push on things that matter.



The end is almost always  
the beginning of something better.



It is impossible for you to become poor  
by giving.  
It is impossible for you to become wealthy  
without giving.



Try hard  
to solicit constructive criticism early.  
You want to hear what's not working  
as soon as possible.  
When it is finished  
you can't improve it.



To get better at speaking  
watch a recording of yourself speaking.  
It is shocking and painful  
but an effective way to improve.

Don't attribute to malice  
what can be explained by incompetence.



Worry is ineffective.  
It is certain that 99% of the stuff  
you are anxious about won't happen.



You can ignore any website  
with the word "truth" in its URL.

Be extremely stingy in making promises  
because you must be generous  
in keeping them.



Don't mistake a clear view of the future  
for a short distance.



A proper apology  
consists of conveying the 3 Rs:  
regret (genuine empathy with the other)  
responsibility (not blaming someone else)  
and remedy (your willingness to fix it).

The best way to advise young people  
is to find out what they really want to do  
and then advise them to do it.



It is usually much easier  
to make big audacious changes  
than small incremental ones.



The big dirty secret is that everyone  
especially the famous  
are just making it up as they go along.

There is no perfection, only progress.  
Done is much better than perfect.



You choose to be lucky by believing that  
any setbacks are just temporary.

If nobody else does  
what you do  
you won't need a resume.



To lower tensions during a dispute,  
mirror the other person's body language.



For a great payoff  
be especially curious  
about the things you are not interested in.



It is not hard to identify a thief:  
It is the one who believes  
that everybody steals.

We are unconsciously distracted by seeing our reflection. You can alleviate a lot of the fatigue of teleconferencing all day if you turn off your self-view.



Read the books  
that your favorite authors once read.



When you can't decide  
ask yourself, "Which choice  
will pay off more later than now?"  
The easy choice pays off right away.  
The best choice will pay off at the end.



As long as an idea stays in your head  
it is perfect.

But perfect things are never real.  
Immediately put an idea down into words  
or in a sketch, or as a cardboard prototype.  
Now your idea is much closer to reality  
because it is imperfect.



Trust the 3-star product reviews because they  
tell both the good and the bad, which is the  
real state for most things.

First, always ask for what you want.  
Works in relationships, business, life.



Even if you don't say anything  
if you listen carefully  
people will consider you  
a great conversationalist.



Curiosity is fatal to certainty.  
The more curious you are  
the less certain you'll be.

Measure your wealth  
not by the things you can buy  
but by the things that no money can buy.



To learn from your mistakes  
first laugh at your mistakes.



It's unfortunate when someone you  
carefully trained leaves; but it is worse if  
you don't train them and they stay.

Your opinion on a contentious issue  
gains power when you can argue  
the opposite side as well as they can.



When you keep people waiting  
they begin to think of all your flaws.



Trust is earned in drops  
and lost in buckets.  
Unwavering honesty will help seal in trust.

An honest friend is someone  
who wants nothing at all from you.



You will spend one third of your life  
in your bed sleeping,  
and almost another third  
in your chair sitting.  
It's worth investing in a great bed  
and fantastic chair.



The purpose of listening  
is not to reply,  
but to hear what is not being said.

Don't spoil a movie  
you are sure to see  
by watching the trailer.  
Only watch trailers for movies  
you are unsure of,  
or unlikely to see.



Your best teacher is your last mistake.



On the dashboard of every gasoline car  
is a symbol of gas pump with a little arrow.  
The arrow points to the side of the car  
that accesses your gas tank.  
Remember this when you borrow or rent a car.

The perfect kind of art  
to display in your home  
are odd pieces  
that a child is unlikely to forget.



Spending as little as 15 minutes  
(1% of your day)  
on improving how you do your thing,  
is the most powerful way  
to amplify and advance your thing.



Instead of asking your child  
what they learned today,  
ask them who they helped today.

The greatest killer of happiness  
is comparison.  
If you must compare,  
compare yourself to you yesterday.



Your 20s are the perfect time  
to do a few things that are  
unusual, weird, bold, risky, unexplainable,  
crazy, unprofitable,  
and look nothing like “success.”  
For the rest of your life  
these experiences will serve  
as your muse.



Don't define yourself  
by your opinions  
because then you can't change your mind.  
Define yourself by your values.



To succeed once  
focus on the outcome;  
to keep succeeding  
focus on the process  
that makes the outcome.

Your ideal partner  
is not someone you never disagree with  
but someone you are glad to disagree with.



An open heart is the most  
direct path to an open mind.



If you are stuck in life  
travel to a place you have never heard of.

Being curious  
about another person's view is the most  
powerful way to change their view.



If you don't care about your people  
they won't care about your mission.



To speed a meeting up  
require that any person who speaks  
must say something  
no one else in the room knows.

The rich have money.  
The wealthy have time.  
It is easier to become wealthy than rich.



If you want to go fast, go alone;  
if you want to go further, go together.



Your best photo portrait will be taken  
not while you are smiling  
but when you are quiet  
a moment after you have been laughing.  
Use a photographer who makes you laugh.

If your sense of responsibility  
is not expanding as you grow  
you are not really growing.



When making plans  
you must allow yourself  
to get lost  
in order to find the thing  
you didn't know you were looking for.

The natural state of all possessions  
is to need repair and maintenance.  
What you own will eventually own you.  
Choose selectively.



To write about something hard to explain  
write a detailed letter to a friend about why it is so  
hard to explain, and  
then remove the initial “Dear Friend” part  
and you’ll have a great first draft.

Commit to doing no work  
no business  
no income one day a week.  
Call it a sabbath (or not).  
Use that day  
for resting, recharging, and cultivating  
the most important things in life.  
Counterintuitively, this sabbath will prove  
to be your most productive act all week.



Embrace pronoia  
which is the opposite of paranoia.  
Choose to believe that  
the entire universe is conspiring  
behind your back  
to make you a success.



Go with the option that  
opens up yet more options.



The first step  
is usually to complete the last step.  
You can't load into a full dish rack.



When you are stuck, make a long list of  
everything that *cannot* possibly work.  
On that list will be a seed that  
leads to a solution that will work.

Right now  
no matter your age  
these are your golden years.  
The good stuff will yield golden memories  
and the bad stuff will yield golden lessons.



The most effective remedy for anger is delay.



Re-visioning the ordinary  
is what art, literature, and comedy do.  
You can elevate mundane details  
into magical wonders  
simply by noticing them.

Aim to die broke.  
Give to your beneficiaries before you die;  
it's more fun and useful to them.  
Spend it all.  
Your last check should go to the funeral  
home and it should bounce.



See that old person taking forever in line?  
That is the future you. Have patience.

Invent as many family rituals  
as you can handle with ease.  
Anything done on a schedule  
—large or small, significant or silly—  
can become a ritual.  
Repeated consistently  
small routines become legendary.  
Anticipation is key.



The chief prevention against getting old  
is to remain astonished.

Art before laundry.



Life lessons will be presented to you  
in the order they are needed.  
Everything you need to master the lesson  
is within you.  
Once you have truly learned a lesson  
you will be presented with the next one.  
If you are alive  
that means you still have lessons to learn.



Very few regrets in life are about  
what you did. Almost all are about  
what you didn't do.

Your goal is to be able to say  
on the day before you die  
that you have fully become yourself.



Advice like these are not laws.  
They are like hats.  
If one doesn't fit, try another.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Paul Slovak | editor*

*Amanda Dewey | designer*

*Jason Ramirez | cover artist*

*John Brockman | literary agent*

*Claudia Dawson | producer*

*Camille Hartsell | fact-checker*

*Shelby Meizlik | publicist*

*Lydia Hirt | marketer*

*Hugh Howey | early reader*

The author can be reached at [kk@kk.org](mailto:kk@kk.org), or at his website [kk.org](http://kk.org).



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Kevin Kelly** helped launch and edit *Wired* magazine. He has written for *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, among many other publications. His previous books include *What Technology Wants* and *The Inevitable*, a *New York Times* bestseller. He is known for his technological optimism. Currently he is a Senior Maverick at *Wired* and lives in Pacifica, California.



Penguin  
Random House  
PENGUIN PUBLISHING GROUP

***What's next on  
your reading list?***

**Discover your next  
great read!**

---

**Get personalized book picks and up-to-date news about this  
author.**

**Sign up now.**